
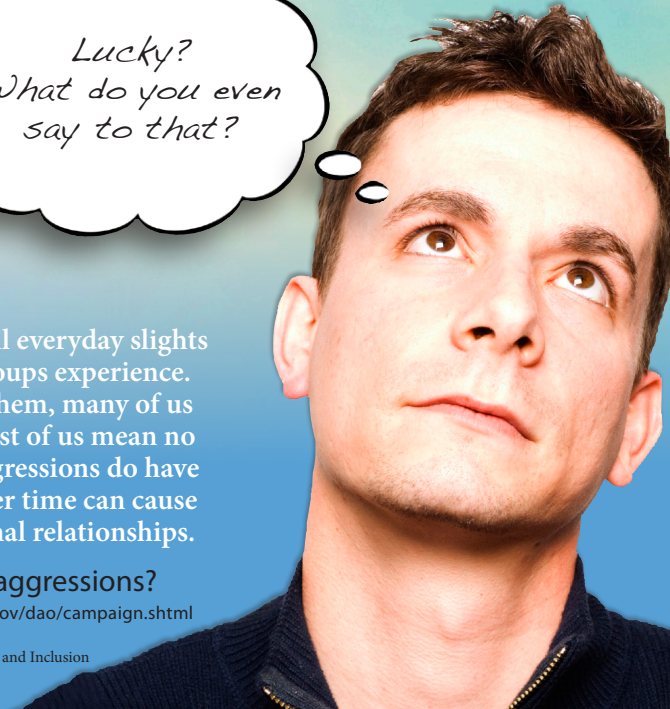


# Say what?

Small slights can have a big impact



*Steve is so lucky, he has a disabled pass. He gets to park close to everything.*



*Lucky? What do you even say to that?*

Microaggressions are small everyday slights that people in diverse groups experience. Nearly all of us commit them, many of us experience them, and most of us mean no harm. However, microaggressions do have a negative impact and over time can cause breakdowns in professional relationships.

Curious about microaggressions?

To learn more, go to: [www.dshs.wa.gov/dao/campaign.shtml](http://www.dshs.wa.gov/dao/campaign.shtml)



Washington State  
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## Put downs - Microaggressions

The small put downs and invalidations that people in marginalized groups experience every day are called microaggressions. The “hidden messages” in microaggressions usually come from people who are well-meaning, have no intention of causing harm and are unaware that their words or actions might be hurtful to people of color, women, LGBT persons, those with disabilities, religious minorities, etc.

### What Do Microaggressions Look and Sound Like?

Some sample microaggressions and their hidden meanings are given below.

- An Asian American, born and raised in the United States, is complimented for speaking “good English.” *Hidden message: You are not a true American.*
- A White man or woman clutches their bags as a Black or Latino man approaches. *Hidden message: You and your group are criminals.*
- A female physician wearing a stethoscope is mistaken as a nurse. *Hidden message: Women should occupy nurturing and not decision-making roles. Women are less capable than men.*
- A young person uses the term “that was so gay” to describe a movie that she didn’t like. *Hidden message: Being gay is associated with negative and undesirable characteristics.*
- When bargaining over the price of an item, a store owner says to a customer, “Don’t try to Jew me down.” *Hidden message: Jews are stingy and money-grubbing.*
- A blind man reports that people often raise their voices and speak slowly when speaking to him. *Hidden message: A person with a disability is defined as lesser in all aspects of physical and mental functioning.*

These everyday occurrences may seem harmless, trivial, or be described as “small slights,” but research shows they have a powerful impact on the psychological well-being of marginalized groups.

Increasing our awareness of how these interactions affect others and being thoughtful and intentional about what we say can help us eliminate microaggressions and improve interactions with those around us.

To learn more about microaggressions go to:

<http://www.apa.org/monitor/2009/02/microaggression.aspx>

Microaggressions, more than just race:

<http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/microaggressions-in-everyday-life/201011/microaggressions-more-just-race>



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